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The First
Nantucket
Tea Party
Illustrated and Illuminated by
Walter Little

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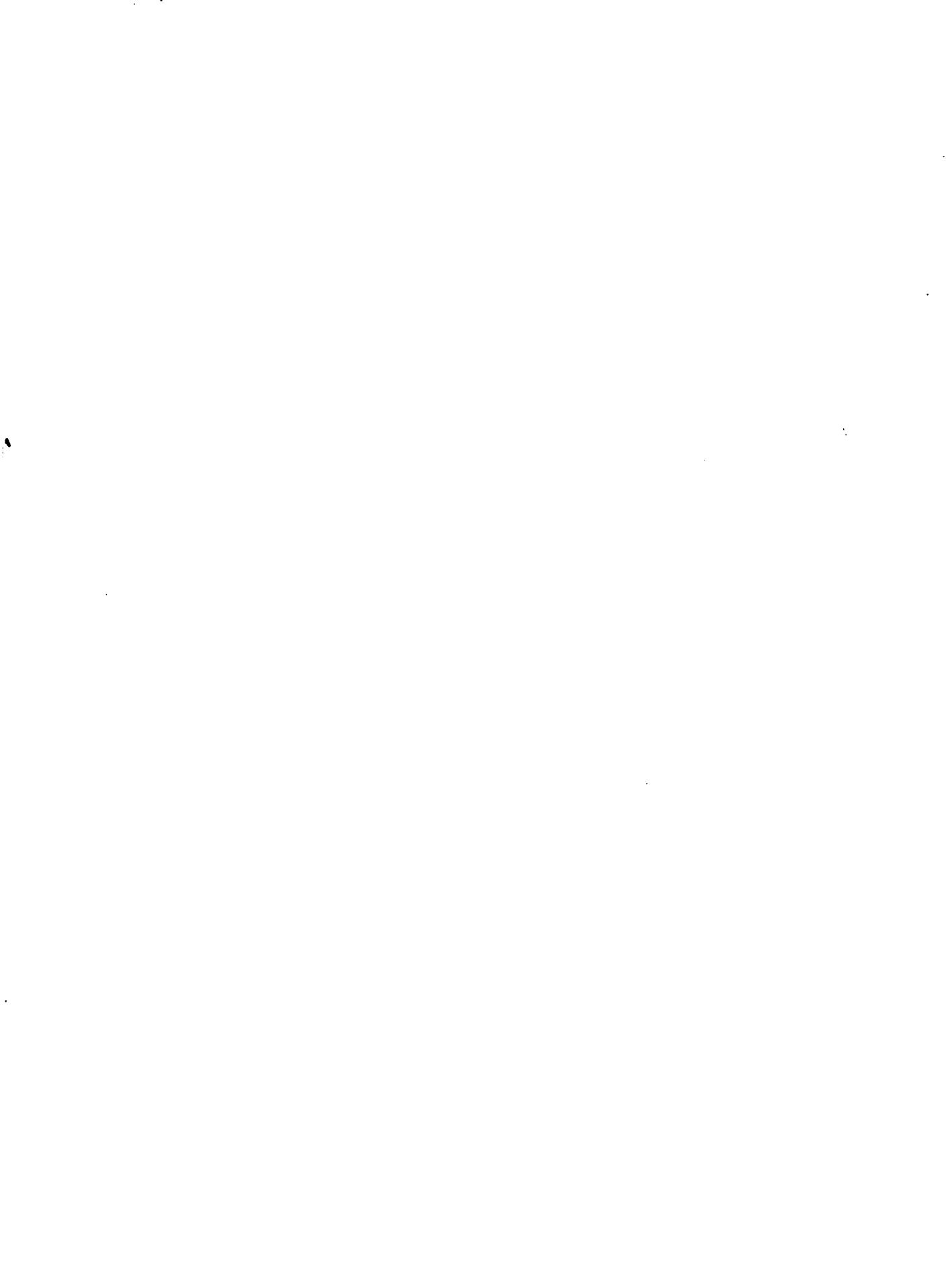
**PRESENTED BY
MRS. CLAUDE A. SWANSON**

With Christmas Greetings,
From Your sincere friend
Bertha.

1907.

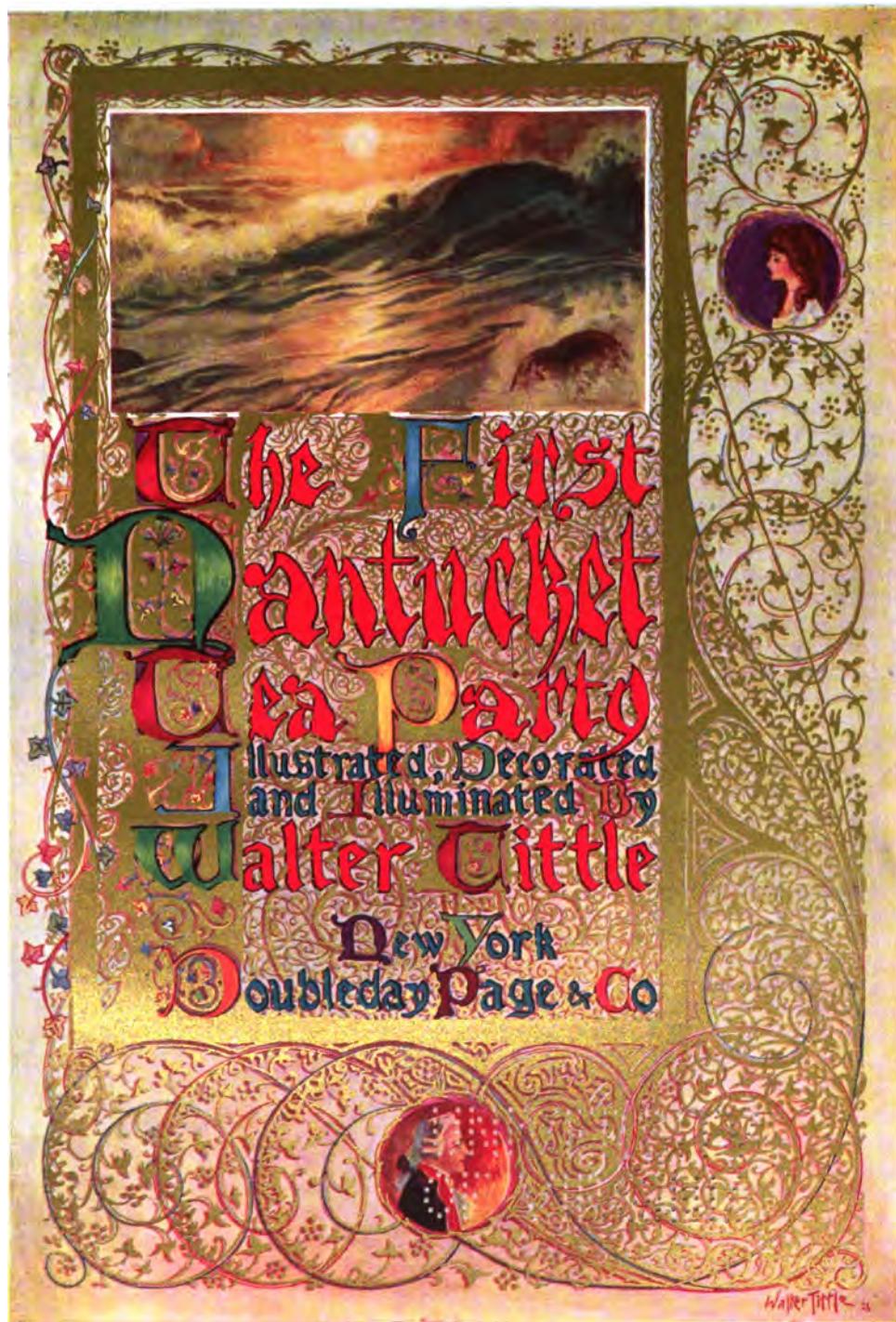


The First
Nantucket
Tea Party









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C.C.
N.Y.
1907
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Published October, 1907

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AMMOSIV 70

TO MY
DEAR
PARENTS
THIS BOOK
IS LOVINGLY
INSCRIBED
W.T.



THE
FIRST
NANTUCK-
ET TEA
PARTY







My Own Dear Mother

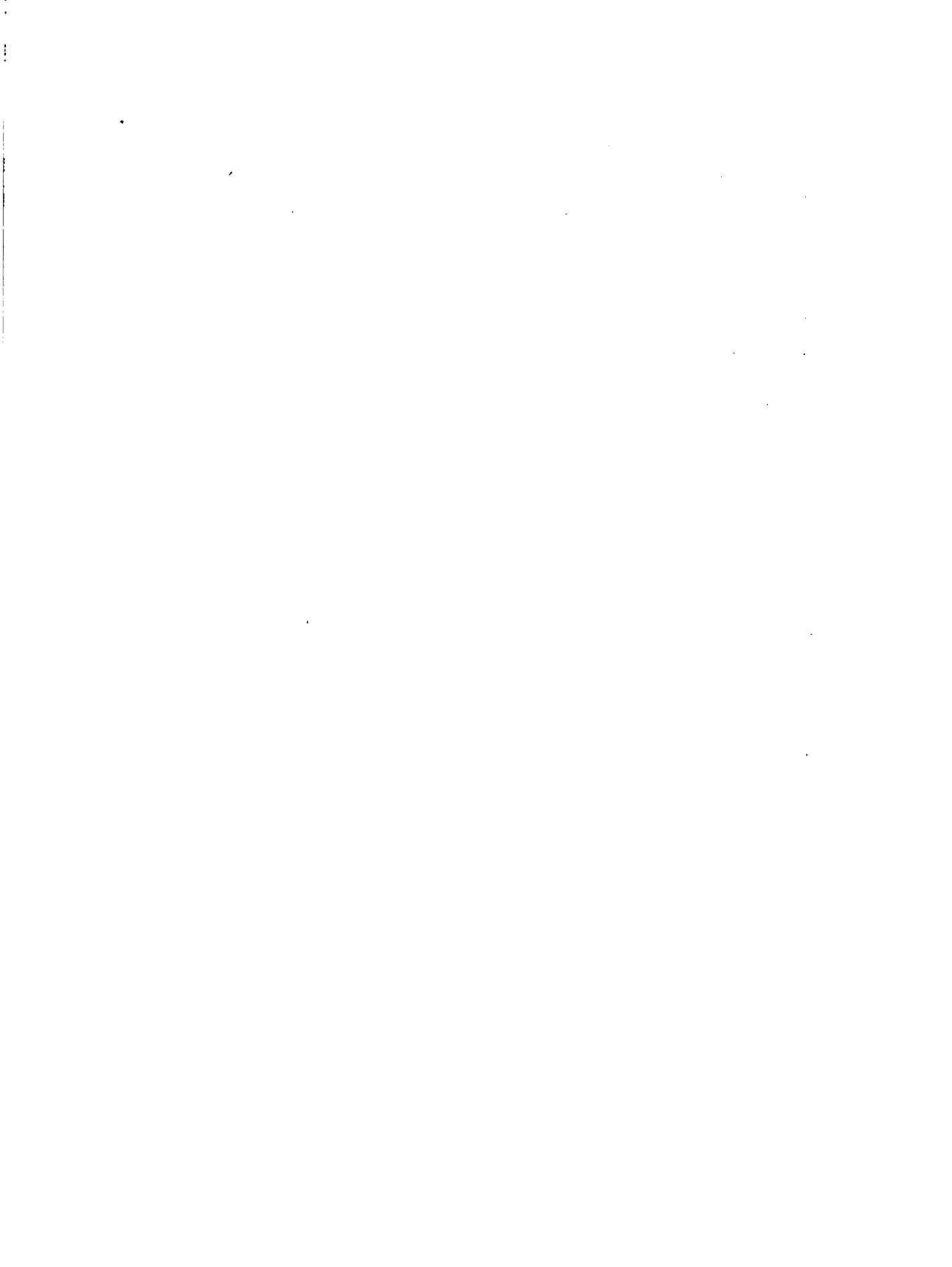
The First Nantucket Tea Party



Starbuck Plantation
Nantucket Sept 20, 1745
My Own Dear Mother

Seems a long time since you and my honoured father and my ever dear







brothers and
sisters started
for your new
home; but I sup-
pose you have
not yet reached
your destination
and I think of you
every day and
all day long as
marching and
marching, follow



I think of you every day and all day long

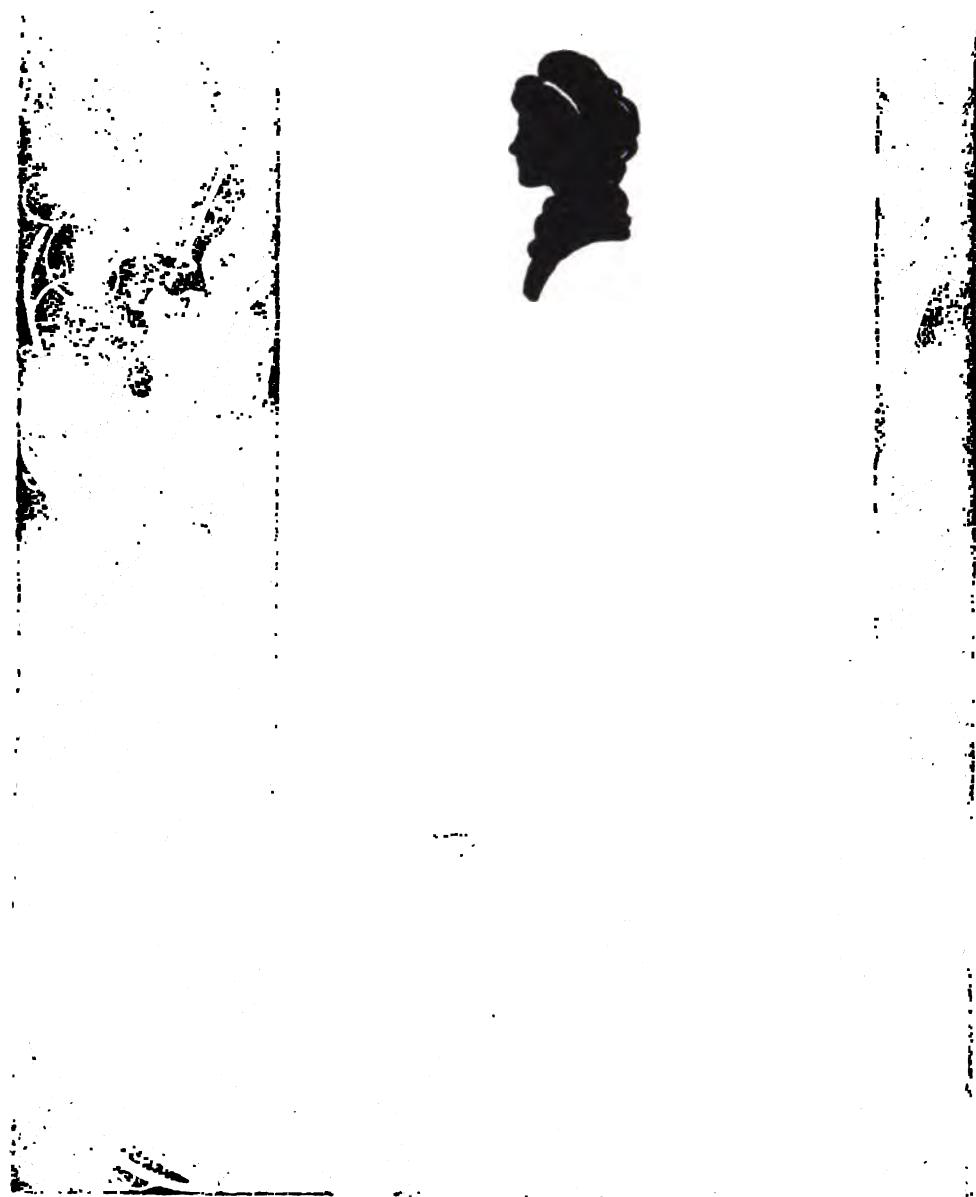
ing the lonely trail
through forests
and sometimes
I am tempted to
repine in that my
father thought it
best to remove
to that far-away
settlement. But
my grandfather
tells me that
the entertaining

of this sentiment
would be unworthy
the daughter of
a pioneer, and
since it was thought
best for me to
remain on the
island for a sea-
son, I must im-
prove my time
to the best ad-
vantage; and



Grandfather tells me that this Sentiment is
unworthy the daughter of a Pioneer.

his I try to do
with cheerfulness
and Aunt Con-
tent is so kind
as to say that
I am of service
to her in our
household duties
and in spin-
ning and weav-
ing.



eradventure
my letter
shall be
a puzzle
to you, so
I hasten to say
that I indite a
paragraph or
two upon leisure
and whenever any-
thing comes into
my mind I desire



you to know I go
straightway to my
uncle's desk and set
it down. I do this
dear mother that
you may share in
my pleasant thoughts
and may know of
my daily life; also
that my brothers
and sisters may in
a measure partake

of my enjoyment,
The principal
news that I
have to tell is that
my cousin, Nathaniel Starbuck, Jr.
has returned to
Boston from his
late long voyage
to China, and is
now hourly looked
for here, where there



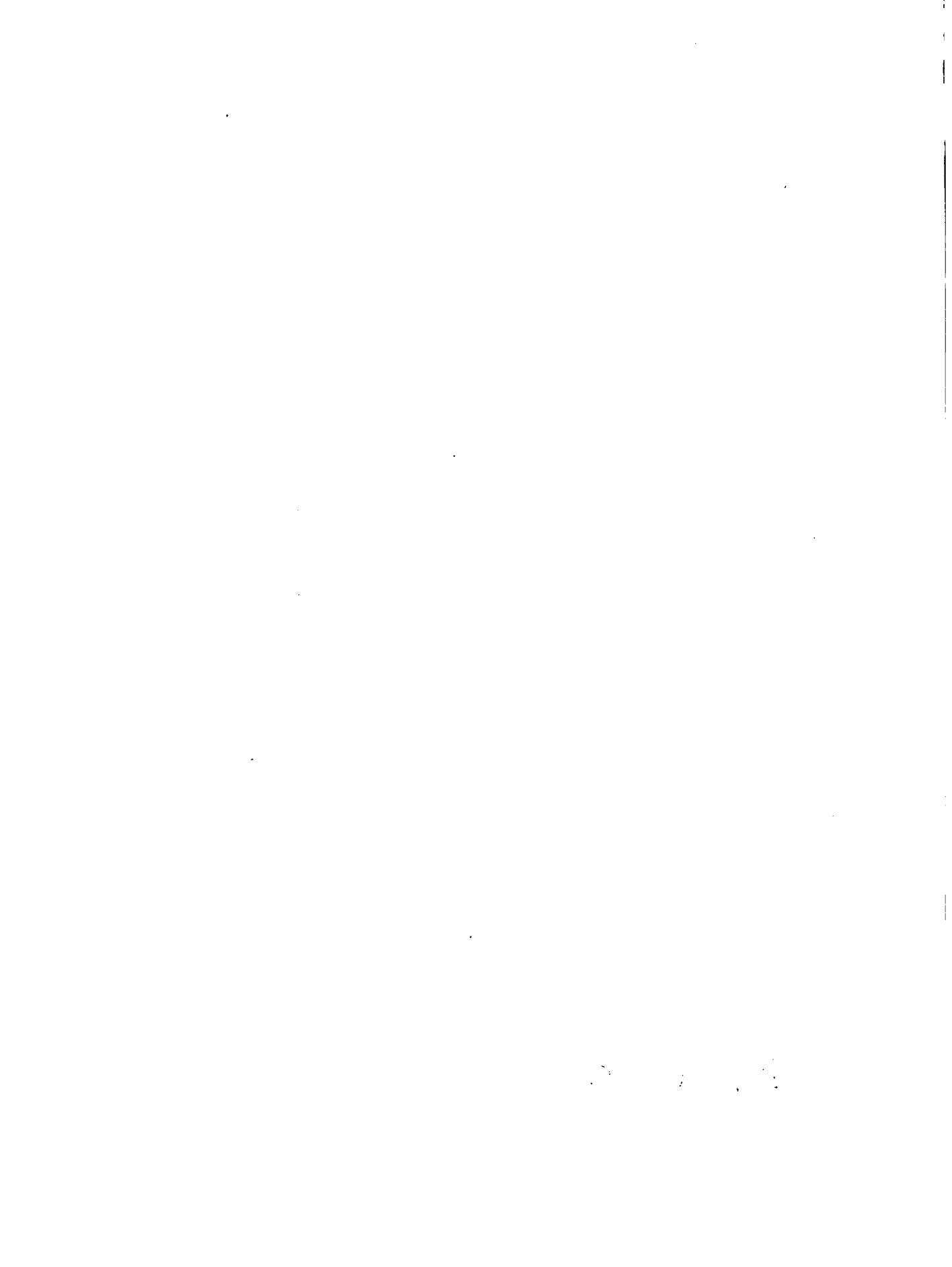
That you may know of my **daily** life

are divers preparations
being made for his
welcoming. My grand-
father walks restless-
ly up and down with
his stout stick peering
anxiously up the road
way by which our tra-
veler must come. Uncle
Nathaniel says with
pride, The boy will
have many stories

to tell." Aunt Content flits about with a smile on her face and anon with tears in her eyes concocting the dishes of which her son used to be so fond; while dear old grandmother knits and knits, because, she says, "I han't never yet wore any stock."

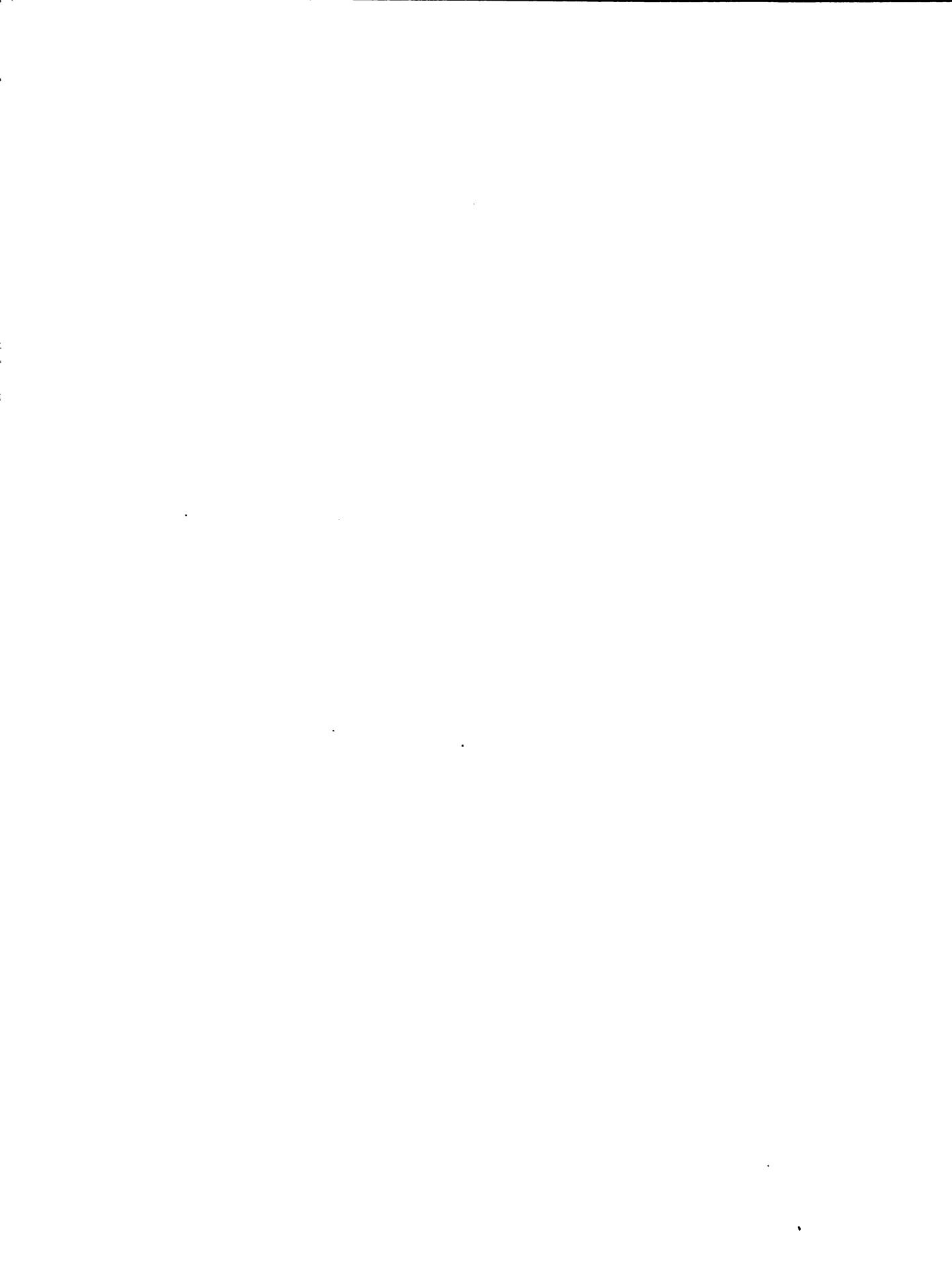


Than'el never yet wore any Stockings but of my make. ☺ ☺



ings but of my make
and I must have a
supply for him to
take on his next
voyage; while I am
to have a new blue
gown made from my
aunt's last web which
is the finest and
softest piece of flan-
nel on the island







My cousin
has come
He is tall
and lithe
with handsome hair
and eyes, and his
complexion is bronzed
by the ocean winds
and eastern suns.
He says it seems
to him like a
fairy tale that I am



My cousin has come

the same little chumpling
of a cousin he used
to toss in the air
when he was last
at home. He is
much grieved to
find that you are
all gone, and is
planning a hunting
expedition, whose
objective point
shall be your far-

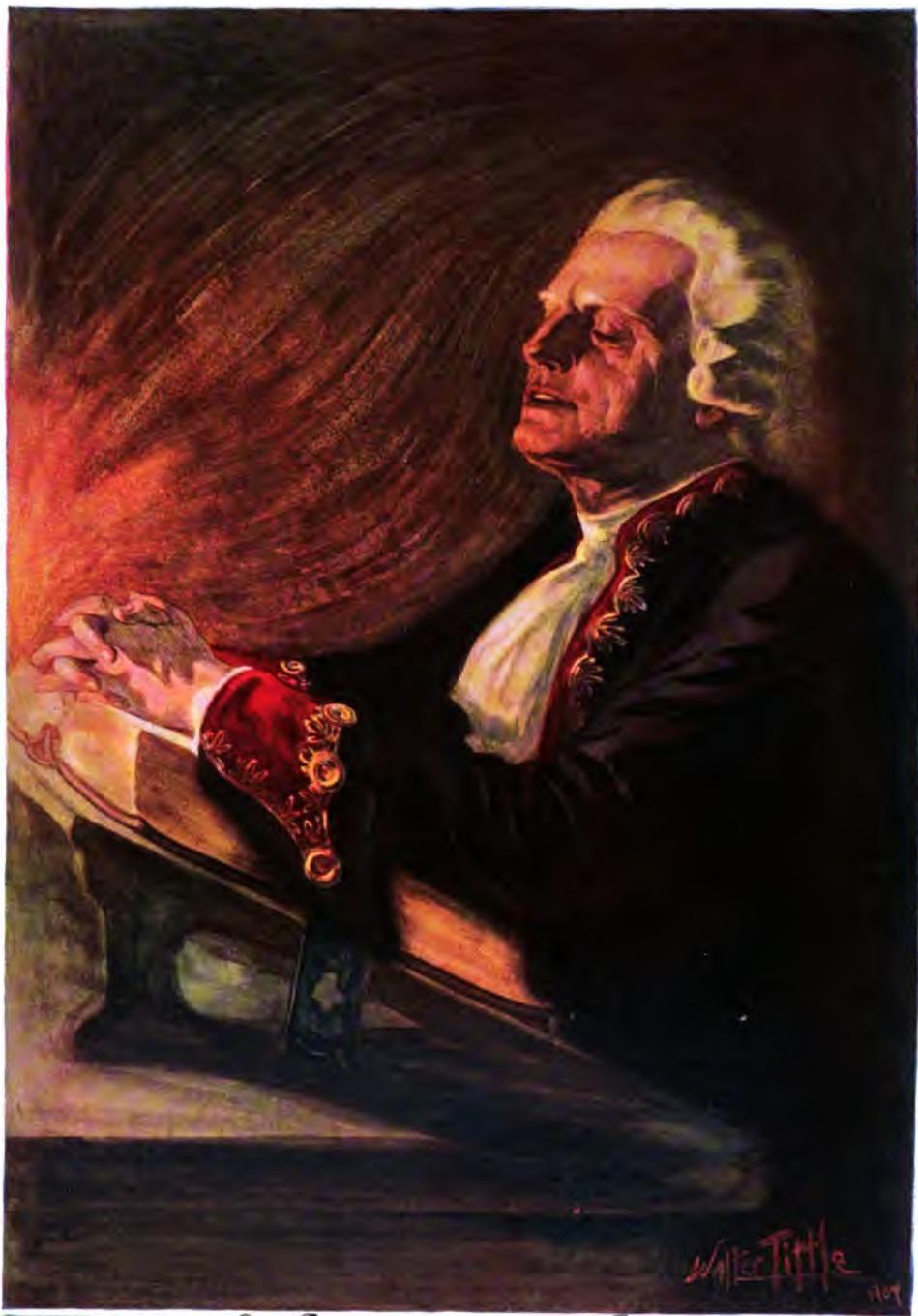
away settlement.

The neighbors all congregated around our kitchen fire to hear his wonderful stories and adventures which he was relating all day long and far into the night and for all that he has travelled almost

over the whole world
he is as happy as a
boy to be at home
on the dear old
Nantucket planta-
tion again. We are
all as happy as we
can be with our di-
vided hearts, and
all have frequent
thought and wish
for our wanderers

while grandfather
remembers you each
morning and evening
at the Throne of Grace

My cousin has
brought a great
many curiosities and
presents for us all.
One is a creamy shawl
for me, woven and em-
broidered with beau-
tiful flowers. Another



Grandfather remembers you
at the **T**hrone of **G**race

is a gown of foamy
Canton crape as
white as snow, and
they are so pretty
I am sure I shall
never dare to wear
them. Grandma says
they shall be kept
for my wedding.

Aunt Esther says
it is not seemly for
such thoughts to be

put into a maiden's
head, but Aunt Con-
tent gave the other
day a whole piece
of linen from the
Fall bleach, to be
kept, she said, for
a day of need.

At all events
my finery is
packed away in
trunks and splices

in a foreign box, and
is not likely to turn
any silly maiden's
head at present.





Cousin has re-
turned to Bos-
ton and yesterday



"The same little dumpling of a cousin"





be sent by a trusty messenger another sea chest. It is a large box of tea the first that was ever seen on the island, real Chinese, which Nat himself procured in China. It is of a green color, with little shriveled tea.

yes, and when eaten
dry has a pleasant
spicy taste. Perhaps
when I send this
letter to you I can
enclose some that
you may see what
it is like. He also
sent a letter saying
that when he returns
to Nantucket the
owner of the ship

in which he yaged
Captain Morris will
come with him from
Boston to pay us a
visit.

We are again
making master
preparation for visit
ors; and if you will
believe it, the great
parlour which has
not been used since

Aunt Mehitable's
wedding, is to be
opened. The floor
has been newly waxed
and polished, and
we have spread down
here and there beau-
tiful mats which cou-
sin Nat brought, with
many curious and
handsome things
which are hung

on the walls and
spread on the
table and mantle-
piece; and the huge
fire of logs, the
sharp weather now
renders needful in
the chimney, sends
out such a glow that
you can have no
conception how
finely the room



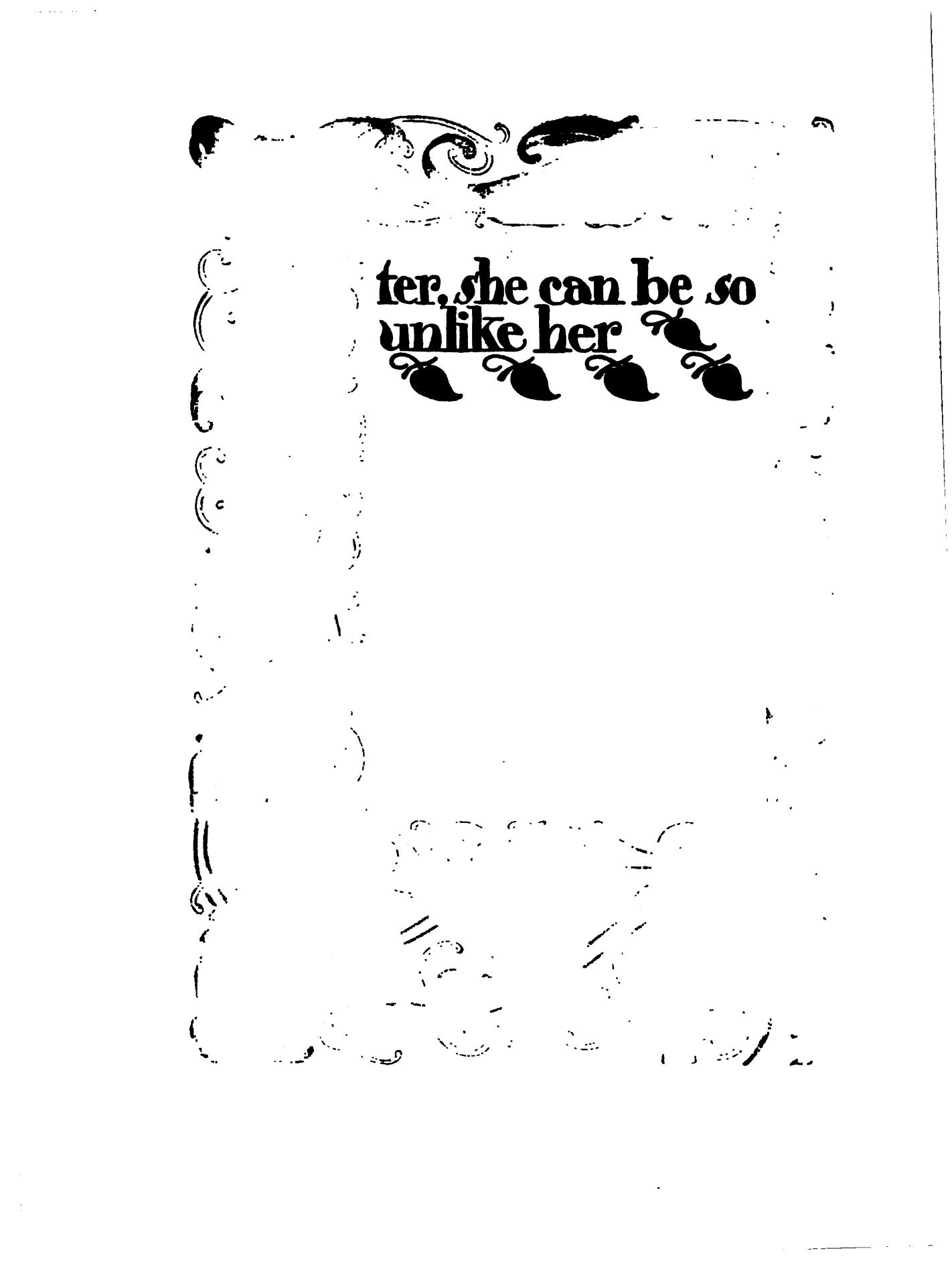
appears. I was admiring it this morning, when Aunt Esther rebuked me gravely, saying, "The bright things of the world are of short duration; but dear grandma said, with a smile that it was natural and right for the



It is natural and right for
the young to admire beauty



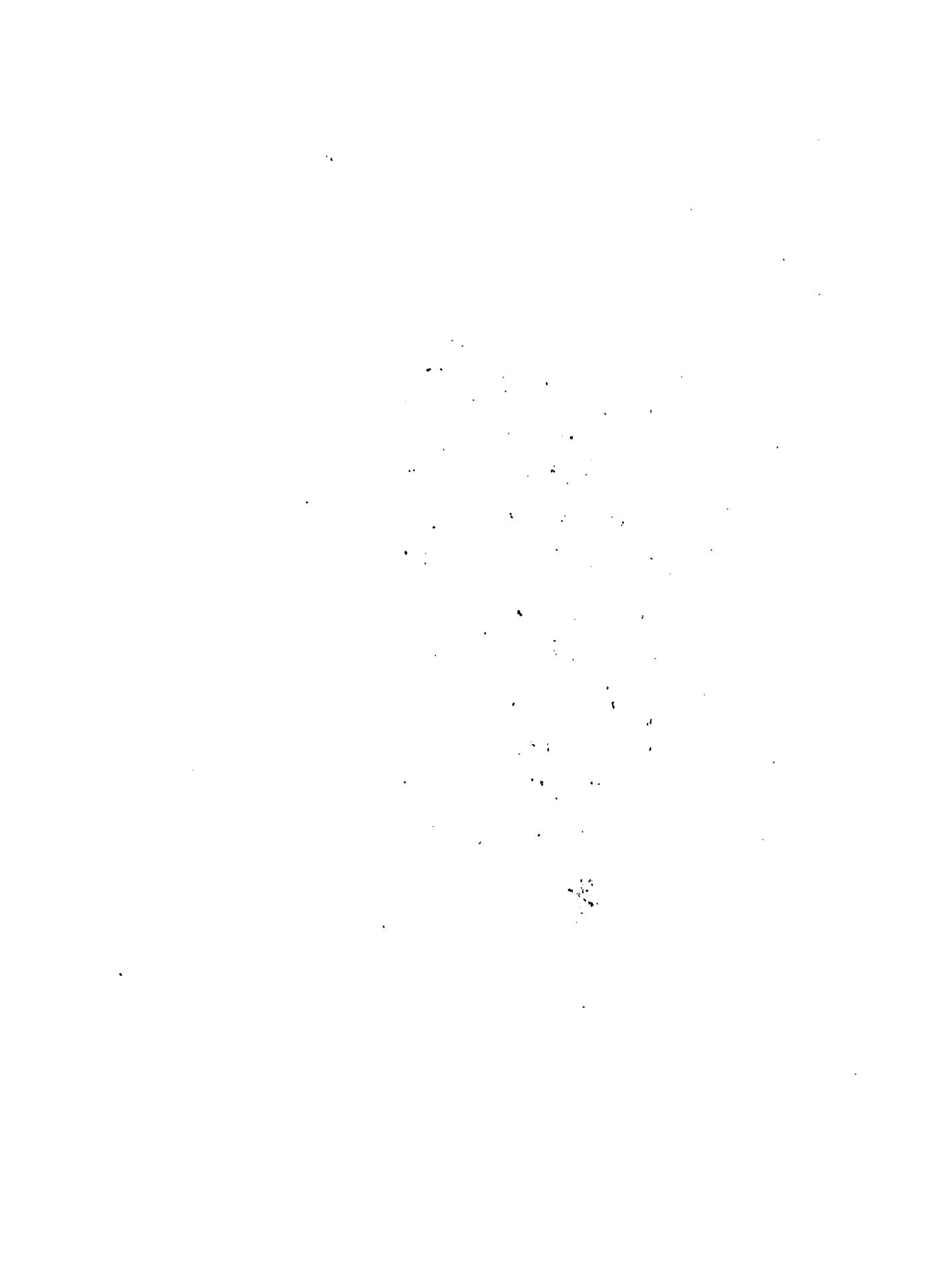
young to admire
beauty, at which
Aunt Esther seem-
ed much displeased.
I sometimes think
she does not like
me because I am
young, but that can-
not be. Yet I cannot
quite understand
how, being my own
sweet mother's sis-

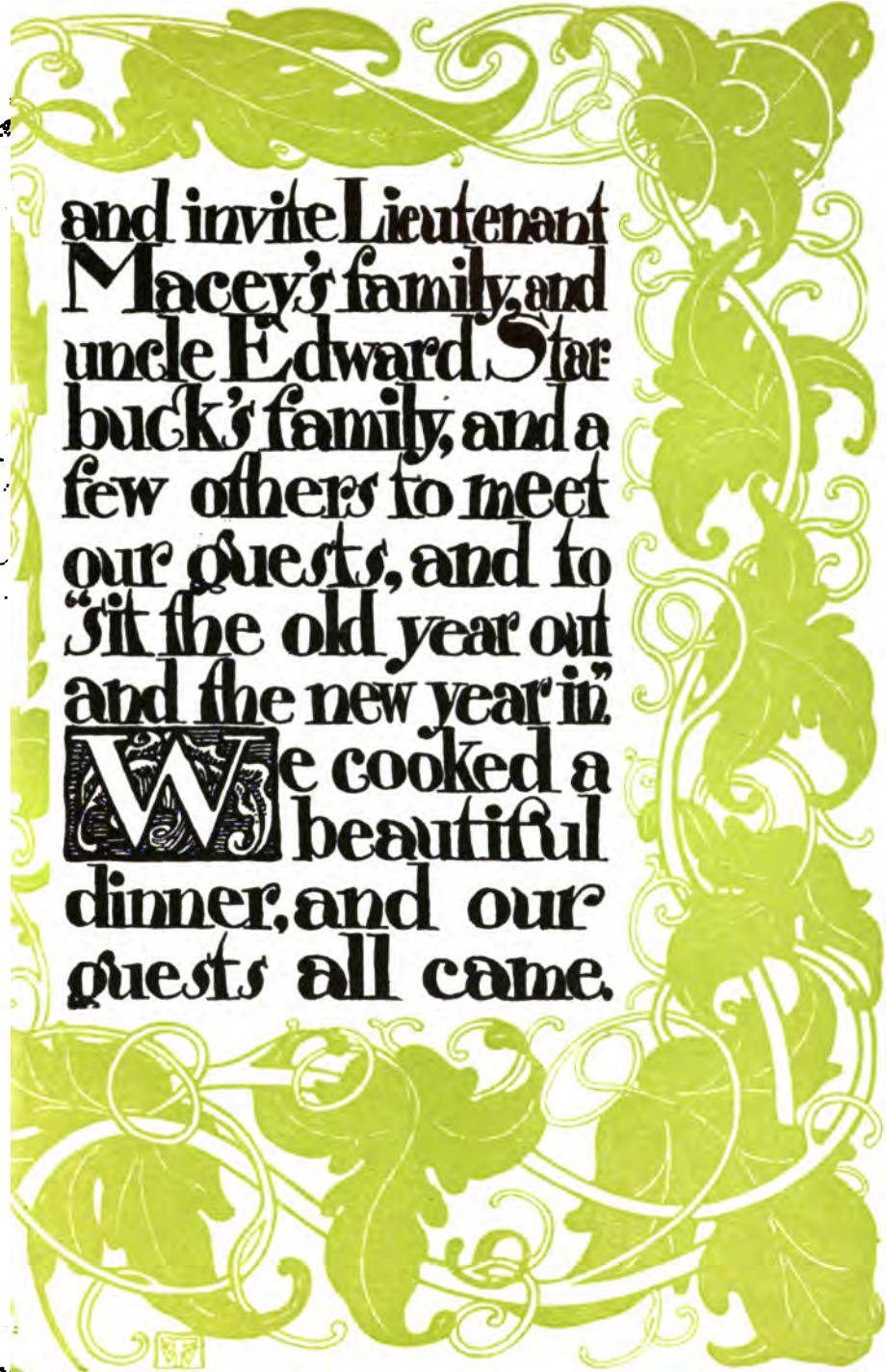


ter, she can be so
unlike her



We have just had
tidings that Cousin Nat
and his friend
Captain Morris
intend to arrive here
on the 31st of December.
Uncle Nathaniel
says he will
have a tea-party



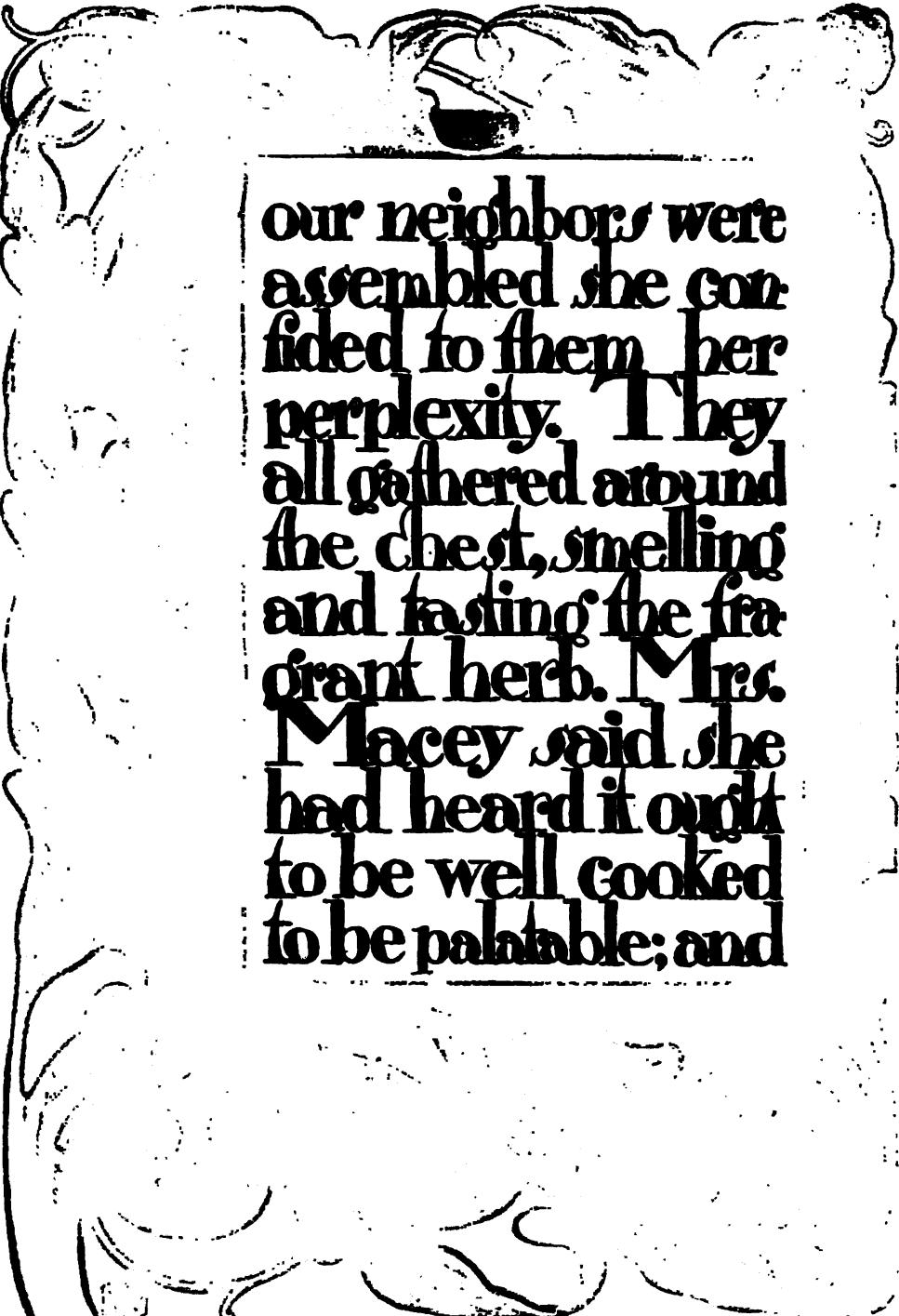


and invite Lieutenant
Macey's family, and
uncle Edward Star-
buck's family, and a
few others to meet
our guests, and to
"sit the old year out
and the new year in"
We cooked a
beautiful
dinner, and our
guests all came.

I wore my new blue
gown with some lace
grandma gave me
in the neck, and
my own dear mother's
necklace. I tied back
my curls that cousin
Nat will not allow
me to braid, with
a blue ribbon which
he bought in Lon-
don. Aunt Esther

**said men dislike to
see girls look so brave
but grandpa kissed
me and called me
"a bonnie bluebell."**

Aunt Content has been much pestered in her mind because she knew not how to serve the tea or cook it, and after



our neighbors were assembled she confided to them her perplexity. They all gathered around the chest, smelling and tasting the fragrant herb. Mrs. Macey said she had heard it ought to be well cooked to be palatable; and

Edward Starbuck
said a lady in
Boston who had
drunk tea told him
it needed a good
quantity of steeping
which was the rea-
son it was so expen-
sive, so Aunt Con-
tent hung the bright
five-gallon bellmetal
kettle on the crane

and, putting a two-quart bowl full of tea in it with plenty of water, swung it over the fire, and Aunt Esther stayed in the kitchen to keep it boiling. While I was laying the table I heard Lydia Ann Macey say, "I



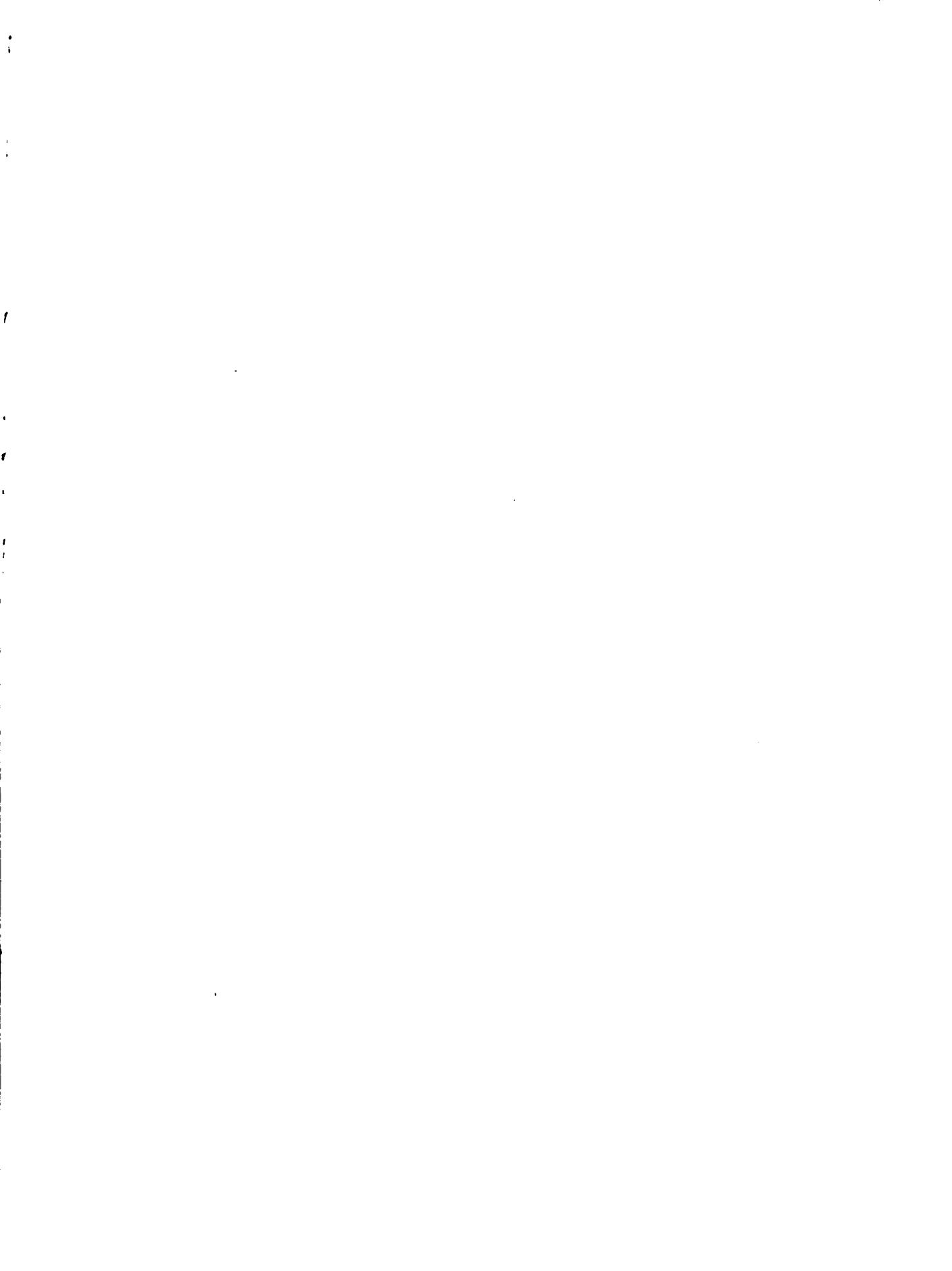
Aunt Content put a two-quart bowl
full of tea in it with plenty of water



have heard that
when tea is drunk
it gives a brilliancy
to the eyes and a
youthful freshness
to the complexion.
I am afraid thy
sister-in-law
failed to put in
enough of the
leaves."







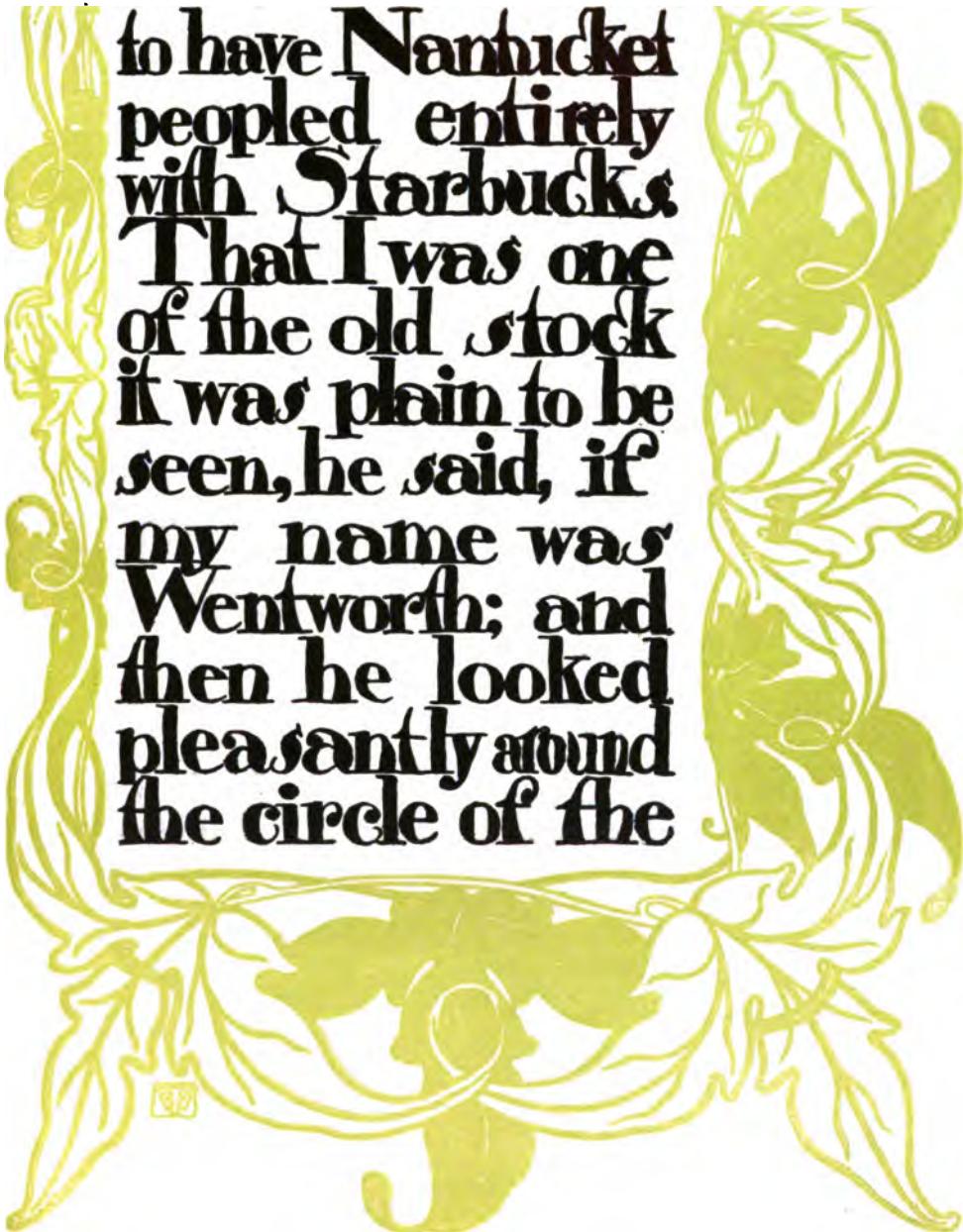
Aunt Esther put in another bowl full. When the tea had boiled an hour my cousin and Captain Morris arrived. Then the tea which had boiled down to



about a gallon, was
poured into grand-
ma's great silver
tankard and car-
ried to the table
and each guest
was provided with
one of her silver
porringers; also
with cream and
bumps of sugar.



The captain talked to me before dinner and I told him before I knew I was getting confidential how you were all off in the wilds. He said enterprise was what the new country needed, and that it was not best



to have Nantucket
peopled entirely
with Starbuck's.
That I was one
of the old stock
it was plain to be
seen, he said, if
my name was
Wentworth; and
then he looked
pleasantly around
the circle of the

Starbucks. I suppose I do not resemble them at all. I saw Aunt Esther looking at me so sharply that I remembered she had often told me it was not seemly to talk with men; so presently I became discreetly silent. But when



She had often told me it was not seemly to talk with men, so I became discreetly silent

Starbucks. I suppose I do not resemble them at all. I saw Aunt Esther looking at me so sharply that I remembered she had often told me it was not seemly to talk with men; so presently I became discreetly silent. But when



She had often told me it was not seemly
to talk with men, so I became discreetly silent

dinner was announced
the captain took me
out and made me
sit by him 

fter grandpa
had asked a
blessing on the
food, Aunt Content
said to her son and
his friend, "I have
made a dish of tea
for you, but am fear

ful it is not rightly
made, and would like
to have your opinion;
whereupon my cou-
sin and the captain
looked and sniffed
at the tea, and my
cousin made answer
As my loved mother
desires my opinion
I must needs tell
her that a spoonful

of this beverage, which
she hath with such
hospitable intent
prepared for us
would go high to kill
anyone at this table,"
and the captain said
laughingly that my
aunt could keep the
decoction to dye the
woolens. He further
said he would in-

struck us how to draw
the tea, and this young
lady," he said, turning
to me, "shall make the
first dish of tea ever
made on Nantucket."
So the tea was made
under his direction
and poured into the
tankard Aunt Con-
tent had got ready,
and the captain



We had a wholesome dinner and enjoyable withal

carried it to the ta-
ble for me and help-
ed to pour it into
the porringer for
the guests. He was
so kind also as to
say it was the best
dish of tea he had
ever tasted.

We had a whole-
some dinner
and enjoyable withal.

Cousin Nat told
stories and sang
songs in which Capt.
Morris joined him
and then the happy
new year's greetings
took the place of the
good-byes when our
neighbors left for
their homes.

My cousin's friend
still stays for

the shooting, and there
is not much spinning
and weaving done
for it takes so much
time for the cooking
and the eating and
the visiting. He is
very agreeable and
calls grandfather
"the Miles Standish
of Nantucket." I
heard him tell

Uncle Nathaniel,
that we had good
blood, and ever since
he became acquaint-
ed with cousin Nat
he had conceived
a great admiration
for the Nathaniel
Starbucks; and
he said something
about a wife. Per-
haps he remains



Derhaps be remains here
on Aunt Esther's account



here on Aunt Esther's
account; but, dear
me, she is so prim,
(I write with all re-
spect, dear mother)
and he is such a
joyful gentleman,
I do not understand
how such a wedding
could be harmonious.
If he has a regard
for her it must be

on account of the
Starbuck blood.
Oh, my mother,
how can I tell
you! It is not for
love of Aunt Esther
that Captain Morris
remains, but for your
own little daughter;
and all the Starbuck's
saving Aunt Esther
who declares I ought

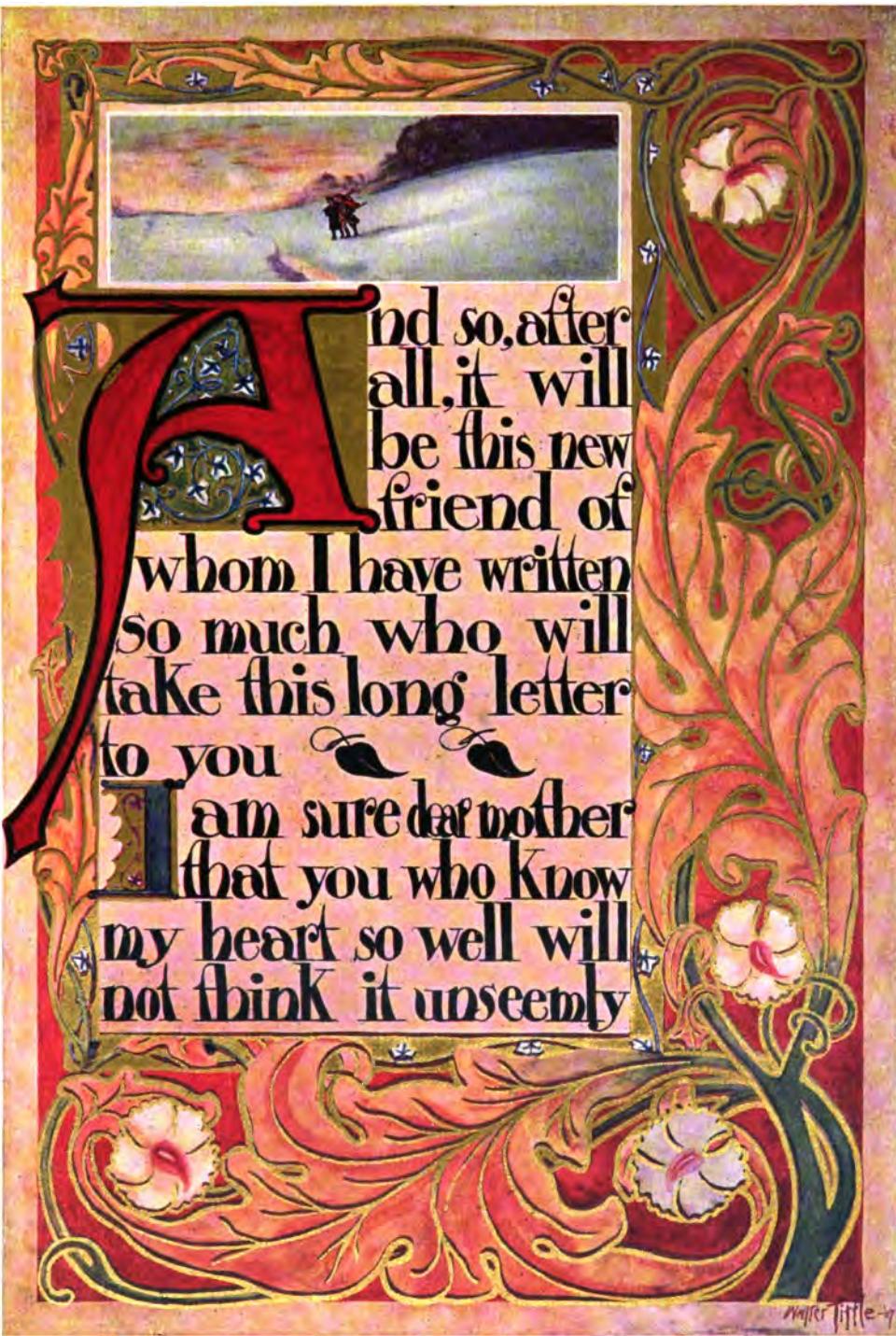


Aunt **E**sther declares **I** ought to be
put back into **P**inafores



to be put back into
pinasores - have gi-
ven their consent
that I shall be mar-
ried and sail away
with my husband in
his ship to foreign
ports, to see for
myself all the won-
ders of which I
have heard so much
of late. But I will

not give my consent
until I first have that
of my father and
mother; so there
is a company being
made up to go with
cousin Nat and the
Captain through
the snows to your
far-away home.



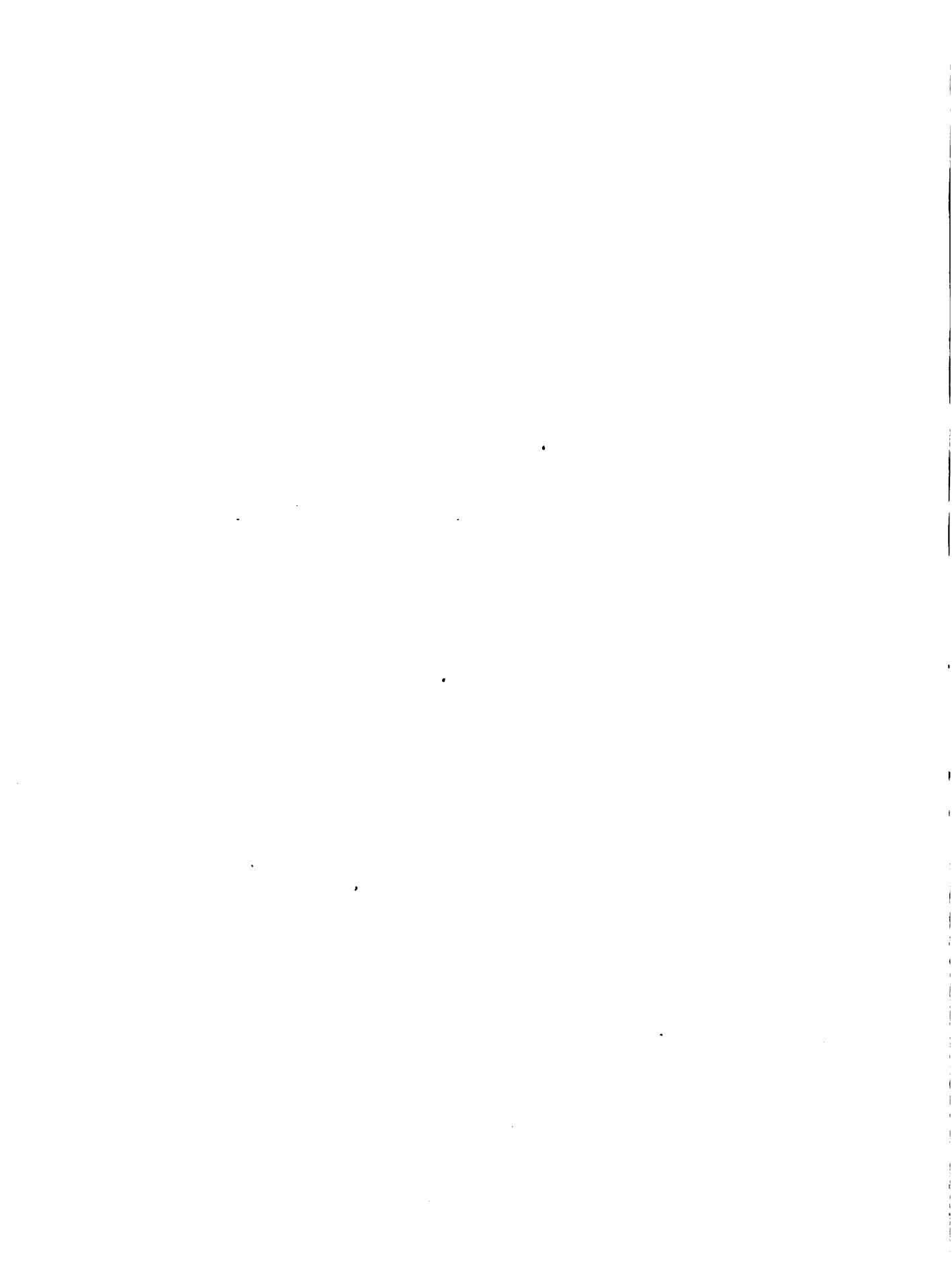
for me (to pray) that
the Lord will guide
your heart and that
of my father to feel
kindly towards this
gentleman; for, indeed
he is of good repute
and is so kind as
to be very fond of
me; and (if) I feel
that I have your con-
sent, and that of my

honoured father, to
gether with your
blessing, I shall be
very happy, and
take an honest pride
in being his hon-
oured wife 

 The Captain
declares, laugh-
ingly, that I am send-
ing him on a quest
like a Knight of



For, indeed, he is of good repute and is
so kind as to be very fond of me



old to prove his love.
I cannot help thinking it strange his
wanting to marry
me, and when I said
so one day, he replied
gravely, that it was all
on account of the
tea, which got into
his head. And indeed
it may be so, for I
was flighty, and

hardly shut my eyes
to sleep at all the
night after partaking
of it; and then my
dear grandmother
says she would not
answer for the con-
sequences of what
she might be led to
do were she to make
use of it every
day ♫ ♫

I send you, with
other articles,
some of this famous
tea, and a bit of the
white crape that I
shall, if so it seemeth
best in the judgment
of my honoured fath-
er and dear mother,
wear as a wedding gown
I The household
all join me in

sending loving greet
ing to you all, and
I remain, now and
ever,

Your loving and
dutiful daughter,
Ruth Starbuck
Wentworth





So on some
day in that
midwinter
of 1745 —
old tenors-Captain
Morris and cousin
Nat crossed the
bar at high-tide,
sailed up the bay
singing sea-songs
no doubt slow and
alot, struck the

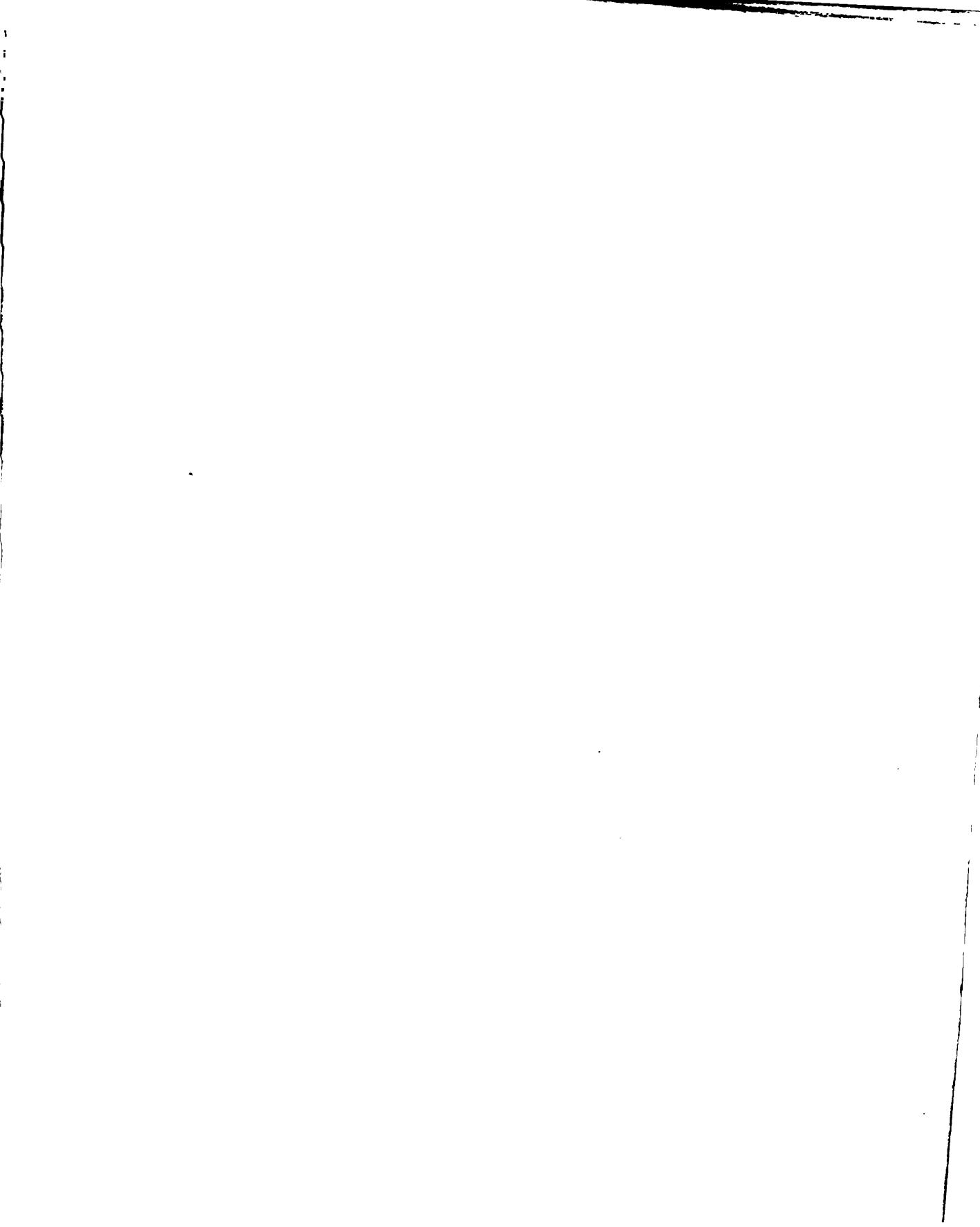
woods at Woods -
Hole, and went tramp-
ing through the snow
Portsmouth way per-
haps, after the Went-
worths in the wilder-
ness, came back duly
with a blessing, and
then the great parlour
would shine again
in the great log fire,
and all the Starbuck



he great parlor would shine again

faces would grow radiant, save that of poor Aunt Esther, who had a secret of her own, perhaps. Ruth came near, guessing touching the jovial gentleman who bore the maid away from her sweet wild island home. ?







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